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dividual affair, and looked on with great disfavor by the tribe. Matters went on very well for a few months under the new regime. But Birche, a man of little capacity, at the same time a coward and a tyrant, could not be content with his position. He began a system of ill treatment against which the people grumbled, but which they feared to resent. At first both Lyon and myself tried to quiet the complaints, believing that punishment had been justly inflicted, and knowing that

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> "No man e'er felt the halter draw
> With just opinion of the law,
> Or held with judgment orthodox
> His love of justice in the stocks."

But it soon became apparent that his majesty (they are always called king) was abusing his power. The Indians dared not quarrel with Birche, for fear of offending the government, but came to Lyon almost daily with complaints. At last we decided to effect a change. Birche went to Limon to draw his salary, and at the same time to complain of a purely personal quarrel with Willie, in which he had fared worst. I arrived there a few days later, having completed my exploration, and being on my way to the Capital. On being asked for information and advice by the Commandante, I told the story and urged his removal. This could only be done by the minister, but he was suspended until the decision of that officer could be obtained. In a few days I saw Mr. Herrera, and after a conversation he decided to endorse the Commandante's action. Birche was accordingly removed, Willie was given a nominal chieftainship, and Lyon instructed to assume all responsibilities. Thus in less than two years the people have, without knowing how it happened, been deprived of their hereditary chiefs, and a foreigner placed over them. Willie remains with the empty title of chief without even the power to issue an order or punish an offender, except when ordered by Lyon. This gentleman has their entire confidence and respect, and many of the Indians begged to have even the title taken away permanently from the "royal" family. I have been thus prolix on this branch of the subject, because I was an eye witness, a participator, in the latter part of the events I relate. Trivial as they are, they may interest some, throwing light on the manner in which one tribe after another is subdued. [123]

A strange fatality seems to hang over these Isthmian Indians. Even when not brought into contact with the debasing influences of civilization, the tribes are visibly diminishing. Less than two centuries ago, the population of Talamanca, as Costa Rica calls her southeastern province, was counted by thousands, now barely 1200 souls can be found. The Shelaba tribe is extinct; the Changinas are at the point of extermination, the Tiribis number but one hundred and three souls, and Lyon tells me that the Cabecars of the Coen have diminished fully one-half within the last seventeen years, while the decrease in the Bri-bris is hardly less rapid. 161

During my travels in Talamanca I collected in each district an accurate 124 161

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764 bundle about two feet long; enveloped in a piece of cloth of native make, prepared by being painted in an allegorical manner.

These cloths, about four feet long by two wide, are painted with a red vegetable juice, in figures two to four inches long. The devices vary according to the cause of the death of the individual; whether it be from fever or other disease, old age, snake bite, wounds, &c. One of these cloths, in the Smithsonian museum, is painted for a person who is supposed to have died from snake bite.

The bones, having been tied up in the new bundle, are carried, again under a pole, to the house where the feast is to be held, and are there placed on a little rack overhead, out of the way of persons passing underneath.

Everything being ready, the first installment of food cooked, the chicha brewed, and chocolate boiled, the feast begins.

[123] I had the rare good fortune, not only to witness the ceremony at the death of the persons mentioned above, but also to be present at the death feast of the chief Santiago. That is to say, I saw all that happened on the first and the last days; the intervening thirteen or fourteen being all alike; a succession of eating, drinking, dancing; a disgusting scene of carousal and debauch that did not possess even the merit of variety.

766 The feast was held in a large house, adjoining the residence of the chief Birche. The house is about seventy-five feet long and forty wide; the ends being round, and the only light entering by the large doorway left open at one end. A little rack, made of wild cane was tied up to the sloping side of the house, about eight feet from the floor, and on this was laid the bundle containing the disjointed skeleton of the murdered chief. At a given signal, the principal singer or priest took his position on a low stool, flanked by the other priests and some volunteers. All were regaled with chocolate served in little gourds. The priest began a low chant and two men started twirling the stick to light the fire. As fast as one tired, [372] another took his place until the sparks glowed in the pit bored in the lower stick. A yell from the priest announced this, and a piece of cotton wool was ignited from the burning dust; with this the fire-wood, previously prepared, was lighted and the fire placed under the remains. Here it was kept up until the end of the feast. After the lighting of the fire, singing and dancing began in earnest, interrupted occasionally by eating and drinking.

766 534 535 The dances are very similar; the principal differences visible to an observer are in the disposition of the dancers, whether in a circle or in one or two straight lines. In the latter case, the two lines are parallel, and the dancers face each other. The dancing is kept up to the "music" of small drums, carved out of a solid piece of wood, with a single head, made of the belly skin of the iguana; the other end is open. The drum is held under the left arm, and is beaten with the tips of the fingers of the right hand. The drummers, ranged in a line, sing a monotonous song, with a chorus; the time being beaten on the drums. Sometimes a

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dried armadillo skin is scraped with a large bean-like seed; in the same manner as I have seen the negroes of the West Indies scrape a roughened calabash with a bone. The dancers clasp each other over the shoulder, around the waist, or hook arms; both sexes taking part in the dancing, but not in the singing or drumming, these being the especial province of the men. The steps are usually about three forward and to one side, and then the same number backward. When arranged in a circle, this carries them gradually around the musicians. When in a straight line, they keep on the same spot. The songs are a sort of recitative, sometimes impromptu, sometimes of fixed words; the chorus a sort of "fol-de-rol," a series of meaningless syllables. These songs for dancing must not, however, be confounded with the sacred songs of the priests, of which I shall have occasion to make fuller mention in the proper place.

The dances are kept up nearly all, and sometimes all night at the funeral feast; the participants retiring from time to time and sleeping an hour or two when exhausted, and returning with renewed vigor to chicha drinking, eating, and dancing. It is particularly on these occasions, when the older people are too drunk, or too busy to keep strict watch, that the younger folks manage to evade their vigilance and ——. These eminently practical courtships almost invariably precede the asking of the father's consent by the would-be bridegroom.

After more than two weeks of this license and debauchery, during which three cows, about a dozen pigs, hundreds of bunches of plantains, several quintals of rice, and hundreds of gallons of chicha had been devoured, the *bi-ka-kru* or steward announced that the commissary had given out and the riot must come to an end. I was notified according to previous agreement and went at the time appointed. As distinguished guests, our party of four were shown to the best hammocks, where we were seated, and in a few minutes served with cups of chocolate. In a little while, all of the priests seated themselves on low benches, the leader in the middle. The lay chorus singers were ranged in a double line facing each other and below the priests. The fire was carefully carried from its place under the corpse and piled almost between the feet of the principal priest. All drank chocolate and the priests sounded their rattles. The leader began a low dirge-like song in the sacred jargon, which I was told described in detail the journey of the defunct to the other world. It told of the dangerous rivers he had to cross, where alligators lay in wait to devour him; of the great serpents who disputed his path; of the high hills he had to climb with weary steps; of the fearful precipices he must scale; of the beautiful birds with sweet songs, compared with which even the flute-like *silguero* was as a crow; of the gorgeous butterflies that lightened up the path like flying flowers, and finally of his safe arrival at the country of the great *Si-bu*, where he would have nothing to do but eat, drink, sleep, and enjoy himself.

The song was divided into stanzas, and the priests all followed the lead of their chief, the words being a series of set phrases, but in a language

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766 [533] in part unintelligible to the uninitiated. At the end of each stanza was a chorus, where the priests, who during the stanza kept time with their rattles, now gave a peculiar twirl, and the lay singers joined in the chorus.

As the song approached its end, the leader was furnished with a big gourd of steaming chocolate, holding about a quart. As he finished, landing the dear departed safe beyond further troubles, he announced it with a most unearthly yell, in which all hands joined; he at the same time turning the chocolate over the fire, totally extinguishing it. The party at once arose and for a minute or two all was bustle and confusion of preparation.

[767] [783] A person, whose office it is to handle the dead, endeavored to lower the bundle but it was a little out of his reach. Nobody else could touch it for fear of defiling himself. To lend a hand would have cost an Indian three days of purification. I drew my long knife, which all learn to carry in this country, as an actual necessity; and with a couple of blows cut the fastenings and brought the little cane rack, bundle of bones and all, tumbling into the outstretched arms of the official, with much more haste than solemnity. Nobody seemed shocked, and being a foreigner, and withal a medicine man, who had made cures where their best doctors had failed, I was of course impregnable to *bu-ku-ru'*. The aforesaid official now lashed the package to its stick, and two long slender strings of loosely twisted cotton were tied to the head of the package.

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[587] Santiago had had three wives. One of them had re-married to his successor; but there were two remaining in widowhood. A procession was formed. First came the priests with their rattles. Next the chorus singers with their drums. Next the corpse, borne by two men, and preceded by the two widows, each holding the end of one of the cotton strings, leading the dead, as it were, to his final resting-place. Next ourselves, as the most distinguished persons present, and escorted by the two chiefs. Behind us came the older men, and following them the usual rag, tag, and bob-tail of young men, women, boys, and persons of no account generally. Some of the boys however, true to boy nature, were as usual irrepressible, and instead of keeping decorously in place, skirmished ahead, and on the flanks of the procession, mounting stumps, logs, or other commanding points to take in the general effect of the pageant. As the procession filed out of the house, some old chicha jars [768] were carried out and ostentatiously broken; but I observed that nothing of real value was destroyed. As soon as the line got fairly under way, the priests struck up another song which was kept up until the procession halted.

Everybody had been on so long a debauch that it was decided to take a rest of three or four days before the party started off. But it was necessary that the bones should be removed from the house. A temporary ranch had therefore been built a few hundred yards distant; and to this the remains were carried and deposited until the bearers were in a fit condition to proceed.

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believe in them. Some of the more intelligent or more civilized of the Indians, those who have been most in contact with foreigners, take foreign medicines when sick, but they are the exceptions. Their method of purifying an unclean person has already been described under the heads of child-birth and uncleanness. They also claim to bring or drive away rain. To do this, the doctor must have a pipe full of tobacco, or a cigar. He goes into the open air, smokes, blows the smoke in certain directions, calling out in an imperative tone of voice, "Rain, go to—" whatever place he may see fit to designate. Once when prisoners between two swollen rivers, forced to wait for them to fall low enough for us to ford; one of our few means of amusement was to give one of these fellows, in our suite, a pipe full of tobacco, and set him to clearing up the weather. He would go outside of our little hut, and between the puffs of smoke would call out, "Rain, go to Panama," "go to Chiriqui," "go to Cartago," in short, to every remote place of which he happened to know the name. It took him ten days before his efforts were crowned with success, and when ultimately the blue patches did begin to appear in the sky, he had the effrontery to calmly claim it as his doing! They also "blow" a proposed route of travel, so as to drive away snakes and [illegible] good luck on the route. In this case, the *modus operandi* is practically the same as for the weather. But their master efforts are when charming away sickness. To see the process, two of my companions feigned sickness and called in the services of one the doctors. He caused each one to procure a live chicken. Catching the animal by the neck and heels he made passes all over the body of the patient, in every direction. Any small animal will answer. Sloths, opossums, even young alligators are used, and are said to be equally efficacious.

After some minutes of this manipulation, he lighted a pipe and blew tobacco-smoke at them. Having given them numerous injunctions about diet, such as forbidding the use of coffee, tobacco, pepper, and salt for a day or two, he went outside the house, and spent half the night seated under an orange tree, singing a doleful ditty, enlivened at irregular periods by unearthly howls and groans. His fee for all this was, in addition to the two fowls, used in the ceremony, and which was all he would have received from an Indian, sixty cents from one and forty from the other; the fees being graduated by the gravity of the supposed infirmities. These doctors claim that their powers are based on the magic merits of certain charms they carry about with them. These charms are supposed to be calculi, extracted from the viscera of animals. Our friend, who tried to change the weather, possessed three of these. One purported to be from the liver of a sloth, another from the bladder of some other animal, &c. I examined them with a glass, and am convinced that they were mere fragments of little calcareous veins, common in the metamorphic rocks of the country, and which had been ground smooth by friction. My little knowledge of medicine, and a moderately well-supplied medicine-case, enabled me to make numerous cures, and of course I soon

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123 acquired the title of *Awa*. When asked by my brother professionals to exhibit my charms, I always gravely produced my little pocket compass, which, by its mysterious movements, never failed to impress them. I never could persuade the boldest to touch it.

262 Three kinds of fasts are observed. The first is only when ordered by the *U-se'-ka-ra* on great public occasions. This is general and simultaneous over all the country. Sufficient food is prepared beforehand to last for three days, the usual time fixed. During those three days, no fires are lighted; the food is served and eaten in silence; no unnecessary conversation is allowed; the people stay strictly inside their houses, or if they go out during day time, they carefully cover themselves from the light of the sun, believing that exposure to the sun's rays would "turn them black"; no salt or other condiment is used in the food; no chocolate is drunk, and even tobacco is forbidden. The second kind is similar, though less rigid than the first, and is voluntary; the same restrictions are observed with reference to fires and food, but the people may talk and go out, avoiding, however, carefully all chance of contact with *ba-ka-ra'*. The third is still more limited, and is the individual fast already referred to for cleansing from *ba-ka-ra'*.

474 574 The feasts are of two classes; the death feast already described, and re-unions for labor. In the latter case; when a person wants to do an extraordinary piece of work, like clearing a piece of forest for a plantation, he provides a suitable quantity of food, and especially of chicha. On the day appointed his neighbors unite early at his house, or at the spot designated, and work industriously until about noon. All then repair to the house, and, after a good round of chicha drinking, food is served, followed by more chicha. After a while dancing begins, and is kept up as long as the chicha holds out. Sometimes the work is continued for two or three days, but always ends early in the day, the afternoon and evening being devoted to eating and especially to drinking.

241 [461] [273] No labor can be accomplished without liberal allowances of chicha, and the man who is the most profuse in this respect is the best fellow. A man will sometimes undertake to make his own clearing, unassisted, but it is very slow work, and drags on at the rate of two or three hours' work a day, with many days of rest. The trees once cut down, the man will burn off the brush, assisted by his sons, or sons-in-law, if he has any, and then plants his crop; usually corn for making more chicha. After that it has to take care of itself. He goes out occasionally to hunt, fish, or sometimes to bring a bunch of plantains. When the corn is nearly ripe, the boys have to watch it to scare off the parrots and pigs. If there are no boys in the family, then all hands usually go and occupy a little shed in, or on the edge of the cornfield. They feast on the green and ripening corn until it is too hard to boil, and then collect what has been left to ripen.

462 The labor of the women is to bring plantains and water, and to cook and wash. They are never required to do work in the plantation, unless

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574 visitor to be overwhelmed with little presents of food. I have been pre-
[431] sented within half an hour, in one house, with five calabashes of choco-
late, at least half-a-dozen quarts of chicha, a dozen or more ears of green
corn, and a dozen ripe bananas. The little boys, with whom I made
[123] friends, fared sumptuously, for it wasn't polite for me to refuse any-
thing.

342 The houses of the Bri-bris are usually circular, from thirty to fifty feet in diameter, and about the same in height. They are composed of long poles, reaching from the ground to the apex. These rest on a ring of withes or vines, tied in bundles, eight or ten inches thick, and resting on a series of upright crotched posts, set in the ground in a circle about a third smaller than the outer circumference of the house. Above this ring, if the house is large, are one or two more, according to its size, not resting on posts, but tied to the sloping poles. The whole is thickly thatched with palm leaves, and finished at the apex by an old earthen jar, to stop the leaks. There is but one aperture to the house, and this is a large, squarely cut door, left on one side. Over the door there is sometimes made a little shed, to keep the rain out. The interior is always very dark. Sometimes, among the Bri-bris, instead of building the house in a circular form, it is elongated and has a ridge-pole, but the ends are rounded, and the door is in one of the ends.

Formerly the Cabecar houses were built in the same style; but now most of them are mere sheds, sloping to one side only and open at the ends and in front. The most pretentious house I saw in Cabecar was a roof sloping to both sides from a ridge pole to the ground, but open at both ends. The Tiribi houses are simply a roof raised on short posts, sloping both ways from the ridge but open all around below. Mr. Lyon told me that formerly the Tiribis as well as the Cabecars had round houses like the Bri-bris, but that the present style is due only to carelessness. The tribes are dwindling so rapidly that they seem to have lost heart even in so important a thing as building comfortable houses; and are content to put up with any make-shift that will shelter them from the weather. The Bri-bri houses are not only better constructed but are much better furnished than those of their neighbors. Beds are placed around the house
352 in the space between the posts and the sloping sides. These are made by planting in the ground two sticks, forked at the upper ends; cross-sticks are laid on these, the other ends being lashed with vines to the sloping rafters. Over these two horizontal sticks are placed boards made of the outer shell of a species of palm; or wild cane is lashed close together. In front of the beds are slung hammocks, between the posts, or to the ends of horizontal sticks projecting a little beyond them. The fire is placed
354 opposite the door near the back side of the house. It is kept up by placing close together, the ends of three large logs which are pushed up as they burn off. Over the fire is a barbacue or frame, sufficiently high to let people pass under it. On it is placed food to keep it out of the way of the dogs, pigs, chickens, and ants. The smoke of the fire is sufficient protection from the latter

386 threads, the Indians lamented to the writer that they had forgotten how to make many of the beautiful colors their ancestors knew. In particular, they wanted to know how to obtain a bright blue. As a consequence, the seeds [123] of the broad-leaf indigo were sent them for planting.

The colors still made by the *Boruca* are black, light yellow, pale blue, and purple. Light brown is obtained by using the natural colored cotton, as stated before. Formerly, red was made by boiling the leaves of the sangrilla tree which is called *rus kra'* in Boruca, and is abundant in the neighboring forests. At present, they do not make this dye, as they seem to think it too much trouble. A fast jet black is procured by cooking the bark of a tree called *carbonero* (*Guarea guara* (Jacq.) P. Wil.) in Spanish, and *grifin-kra'* in Boruca, and combing the liquid with a black clay found in the vicinity. Light blue is made from a narrow-leaf indigo (*Indigofera suffruticosa* Mill.) which abounds by the river. The leaves are boiled for dye. Purple is obtained on the sea coast near Punta Mala and Dominical. Here a mollusk (*Purpura patula* Gould), called *la morada*, is gathered at low tide off the rocks which jut out of the water along the shore. Formerly, the Indians swam out to the rocks with the cotton thread on top of their head to collect the animal.[26] The *Boruca* have no 237 386 tradition of any of this. At the present time, they gather the mollusk when the tide is out from the shore, and from the rock they can reach by wading. Great pain is taken not to let the creature die. On obtaining the mollusk, they first turn over the shell so that the sea water runs out. Then they blow into the shell, holding the thread in front. The angry animal spits out a fluid on the thread, after which he is thrown back into the sea. This fluid is at first a greenish-yellow, but when dry, becomes deep purple.[27] They say that the ink is best when the moon is full, and no good when the moon is new. At other times, the color is not so strong, nor does it dye evenly. [648] This dye has long been prized not only by the

[26] See Cockburn, 1779, p. 112.

[27] According to Dr. W. J. Clench, Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Harvard University, this dye is a drug used by the snail to anesthetize its victim.

[28] See Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, pp. 353–54; Cock-